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RUPEE SERIES

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

GANDHIJI'S TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY

C. Rajagopalachari

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY

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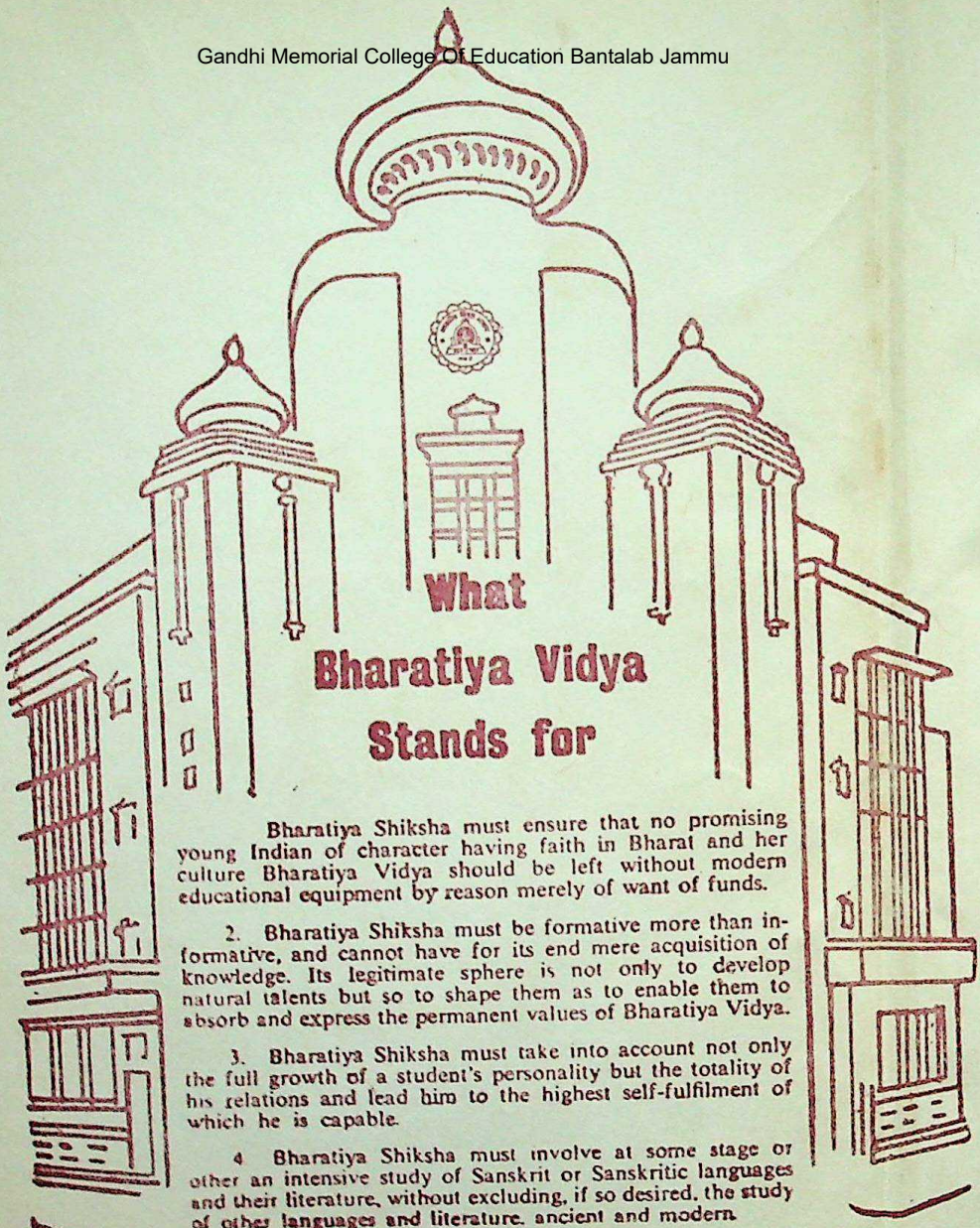

What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

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5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, iddas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration: and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world

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आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

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GANDHIJI'S TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY

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GANDHIJI'S TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY

By

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bhavan's Book University volumes had rare success. About a million and a quarter volumes have been sold in about eleven years. However, there is an insistent demand for the stray volumes which the Bhavan has issued from time to time at a lower price. In order to meet this demand, it has been decided to issue the new One-Rupee Book University Series side by side with the Book University Series.

I hope this new One-Rupee Series will have the same good fortune which the other Series had, of being useful to those who are interested in the fundamental values of Indian Culture, and of reaching out to a wider audience.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
Chowpatty Road, Bombay-7.
Vijaya Dashami
September 28, 1963

K. M. MUNSHI

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Shri C. Rajagopalachari delivered a series of three lectures at the University of Poona under the Ministry of Education's Scheme entitled 'Promotion of Gandhian Philosophy' in the last week of November 1962.

Our thanks are due to the Ministry of Education for permitting us to publish these lectures in book form and also to Mahamahopadhyaya D. V. Potdar, Vice-Chancellor of the Poona University, for his Foreword.

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FOREWORD

Sri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari is one of the elder statesmen of the Gandhian period fortunately yet with us. He has filled with honour posts of great responsibility and piloted the ship of Bharat through trying times. He possesses an intellect as sharp as the blade of a razor. He is a store-house of information, experience and wisdom. He is fearless in his advocacy of his views.

When the Ministry of Education, Government of India, formulated a scheme and intimated to the University of Poona that the University of Poona should arrange every year a series of lectures on Gandhian Thought and Philosophy, the first name that came to our mind for the selection of a lecturer was that of Sri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari. He was then busy preparing for a tour to the United States of America and yet agreed to deliver the lectures—which had to be written out—at the end of November. As the University anticipated that the flower of the intelligentsia of Poona will be very eager to listen to the elder statesman who was for years together closely associated with Gandhiji, the University arranged these lectures in the open ground of the New English School, Poona. Nearly 4,000

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people listened with rapt attention to the old veteran, Sri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, of eighty-three for three evenings. Sri Rajagopalachari invited questions which were very quietly and promptly answered by him.

The lectures proved a great success and I have no doubt that their addition to the vast literature on Gandhian thought and philosophy would be widely welcomed and appreciated as a significant and distinctive contribution. The University of Poona would certainly have liked the honour of publishing these lectures which were the property of the Government of India. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan under the able captaincy of Sri K. M. Munshi has made a name for itself for publishing thoughtful books on Indian Culture and heritage. The University of Poona was, therefore, very glad that the Bhavan had undertaken this publication. I have no doubt that it will be received warmly all over the world.

Ganeshkhind,
Poona 7.
April 25, 1963.

DATTO VAMAN POTDAR
Vice-Chancellor,
University of Poona.

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It was a great honour, one which I specially value, that the University of Poona should think of me in connection with its scheme of Gandhi Lectures. Mr. Jayakar, the founder of the University, was one of the many friends I could claim of that generation. Although he and I were devoted to very different methods of reaching our freedom and our status, his affection for me was never altered or reduced through the long years we lived. I need not refer to the affection I enjoyed at the greatest citizen of Poona, Lokamanya Tilak's hands during the second decade of this century. My attachment to Gandhiji since then has not blinded me to the greatness of Maharashtra's greatest soul and his service to the cause of India's honour and freedom. I was a contemporary witness of all that was suffered by the Lokamanya by way of Government repression and the calumny of political opponents. Poona therefore is a place of pilgrimage for me. I therefore felt particularly pleased and honoured when I received this invitation. My gratification was enhanced by the fact that your Chancellor Dr. Subbaroyan was a family friend who would feel particularly happy to be my host on this occasion. But Providence decreed that he should pass out into the world of pure spirit before I came here to fulfil my

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commitment. I am deeply grieved and mourn, along with you all, over his premature demise.

As you all know I was recently in America and England. I found many earnest warm-hearted and active individuals there, greatly devoted to Gandhiji's ideals and his technology of resistance, some of them more earnest, more warm-hearted and more zealous than many of our own Gandhians here in Gandhi's home country. There are brave men all over the world, men of humanity everywhere, deeply dissatisfied with the present armed civilization, and so naturally there are people all over the world who have accepted and are devoting their time and their energy to the trying out of the Gandhian way of resisting evil. A comparatively weak country like ours surrounded by unfriendliness all round is perhaps not very good soil for the Gandhian way of offering spiritual resistance.

SHASTRAM

Everyone wishing to write something popular in India has written about Gandhiji, among them some very able writers. There can be nothing novel or of fresh interest about it that I can say. Not only has the subject been worn out to the point of boredom; no time could have been more obviously inappropriate for dealing with Gandhiji's teachings than now, when the whole nation is bubbling with anger and battle-psychosis. People are thinking only of guns and bombs now.

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Yet it is not inappropriate that we turn some of our thoughts to him who gave us our present status of freedom, when our country faces a crisis such as we had not been prepared for. We may go too far with our anger, too far with what immediately comes up out of elemental passion and make irretrievable mistakes. It will in any case not do harm to spend a little time over what Gandhiji all his life wished and struggled to impart.

In writing an introduction for a book on the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi compiled for the UNESCO from Gandhi's own words, Dr. Radhakrishnan quoted from Plato who said: "There always are in the world a few inspired men whose acquaintance is beyond price." I had this priceless possession among a few others, and am ever grateful for the affection and trust he was pleased to bestow on me all during his life.

But when asked by this University to deliver a course of lectures on Gandhi I felt completely unequal to the task. If you asked a coal-miner to deliver three lectures on coal what would he be able to do? I am in that state. I have worked with Gandhi for thirty-five years and have continued to live with him even after his death thinking of him not only by day, but often in my dreams also, wherein I have talked to him and he to me. Yet I am as much confused about it as our imaginary friend the coal-miner who was asked to deliver three lectures on coal.

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Gandhiji said: "There is no such thing as Gandhism and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills." This is Gandhiji's unequivocal language. Suppose, then, that for a moment I could somehow contact Gandhiji and I told him that the Poona University asked me to deliver a lecture on his teachings and that I proposed in the lecture to say that what Gandhiji taught was nothing more or less than what was contained in the Gita. He would most certainly congratulate me and applaud that way of explaining his teachings. Gandhiji always wished it to be understood that he invented no new ethic, that he was teaching only what the Gita taught. So let me today give you a summary of what I conceive to be the teaching of the Gita as applicable to our own times. I consider it to be the best way of telling you what Gandhiji desired to be taken as his teaching.

The fathers of Hindu thought approached religion in a scientific spirit. They treated religion as a search for truth and not as a matter of dogma. So, from time immemorial, although various hypotheses were put forward, there was no intolerance of differences. Religion with us was and has always continued to be rather a science of the spirit than a body of doctrines. Naturally, therefore, every variety of approach to the great mystery is not only per-

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mitted in the Hindu religion, but is treated with respect, provided always that the approach is in a spirit of reverence. Various forms of elucidation have been adopted by the different Vedantic schools of thought, but everyone of them is universally treated with respect. All schools of thought recommend the same code of conduct. All the denominations of Hinduism lay down the same ethic and the Gita sets it out. It applies to all good men, whatever their religious denomination. It is not an out-of-date ethic. The way of life taught in the Gita is quite consistent with the requirements of the modern world.

According to the Gita, one should go on with the activities of the world. It does not teach withdrawing from work. We should look upon the tasks which appertain to us, either by being specially entrusted with them or by reason of our place in society, as our duty; and we should perform them with the same diligence and skill which is shown by people who work for selfish ends, while we inwardly maintain a spirit of unselfishness and detachment. Yoga is the name given to this state of mind which enables a man to live a dedicated life while engaged in worldly affairs. Enlightenment, humility and devotion are necessary to enable a man to live this life.

It is easy to be vigilant and to live a laborious life when we are moved by selfishness. But what the Gita wants of us is that we should be diligent and skilful, although the good results

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are for society at large and not for our own advantage. We should cultivate an unselfish and detached attitude even while we are most busily engaged in material activities. The good man always bears in mind that within him, as in every living being in the world, dwells the Supreme Soul. He is constantly at prayer to keep his mind free from lust, anger and personal desire. He looks upon any kind of work as noble if it is necessary for the maintenance and welfare of society.

A good and brave man regulates his work, and is temperate in food, recreation and pleasures. He does not lose heart when he faces difficulties. He maintains courage and equanimity when in his efforts he is succeeding or losing, because he always works leaving results in the hands of God.

What we believe of science, what we believe of religion and what we believe of statecraft, should all be in harmony with one another. Modern science has revealed that the universe is evolved by the gradual unfoldment of the power lodged in the primordial substance. Hindu philosophy is entirely consistent with this revelation of science. Just as Vedanta is fully consistent with the awe-inspiring and beautiful universe as it is unfolded by science, the way of life preached in the Gita is fully consistent with progressive views of citizenship.

Co-operative life in place of the selfish motive is modern economy. This cannot be done

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effectively if it depends on mere external authority, however powerful. We must have a generally accepted culture which works as a law from within, to assist, from within, all the laws imposed from without. Unless we have this help from culture, mere material planning culminates in coercion, fraud and corruption.

The Vedantic culture is pre-eminently fitted for community-life, wherein everyone should work according to capacity and everyone would get according to his need. Work should be allotted to individuals as well as to groups, in accordance with the demands of the general interest. If we desire that society should control individual life so as to produce general welfare, we must not depend only on the spy and the policeman. We must build up a spiritual life and a culture which acts as a law from within and makes joy out of the discharge of duty. We have in the Gita a teaching which can serve as the spiritual and cultural foundation for a just economy of life.

Vedantic thought is the root of Indian culture. The root is still living. It has not totally disappeared or decayed. The minds of the rich and the poor, of the leisured classes as well as of the peasants and labourers, of Hindus as well as of those belonging to other religions living in India, are all responsive to the philosophy which is taught in the Gita. The spirit of Vedanta appeals to all, illiterate as well as learned.

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Work without the aim of personal profit and with an eye only to the welfare of the community is the way of life taught in the Gita. It lays emphasis on the equal dignity and sacredness of all work that falls to one's lot. Indeed, the Gita lays down the socialist doctrine in terms of religion and treats work, if done in the right spirit, as worship of God.

And this is what Gandhiji taught and struggled to convey to us, all his life. If we try to conduct our lives according to what I have explained as the Gita teaching, we are true Gandhians. The fight which the Gita repeatedly urges is the fight against evil which Gandhiji insisted on as a duty. The special technique which Gandhiji gave cannot be handled with success unless one has habituated oneself to work according to the Gita ethic or at least tried honestly and strenuously to do so—even as a soldier in the army cannot face his tasks and ordeals unless he has gone through a rigorous course of physical training.

Later, I shall deal with the impact of other religions and modern thought upon Gandhiji. But this is certain, that the Gita was Gandhiji's *Shastra*, and he acted according to its injunctions—work, detachment, prayer and surrender to God's will.

SATYAM

On one sad and very grave occasion the late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel made a casual re-

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mark to me—I do not think he thought about it deeply, he spoke in a fit of grief—that the payment of fifty crores to Pakistan which Gandhiji insisted on in the winter of 1947 brought about his assassination. At the time of the settlement for the withdrawal of Britain from India, Pakistan was formed as a separate State, we divided our assets and liabilities and it was agreed that a sum of fifty crores of rupees should be handed over to Pakistan as her opening cash balance to start with in her career.

Before this item of the settlement could be put into execution—I was then in Bengal as Governor—the question was raised whether India should not withhold this sum when Pakistan launched a battle against us and brought about a terrible crisis. "If we hand over this money now, it will only be used against us," said the Sardar. "But we have entered into a solemn agreement to give the amount and on that basis we have assumed independence. We should honour the arrangement whatever be the consequences," said Gandhiji. And it was done as he wished. When on 30th January 1948, Gandhiji was assassinated by Godse, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel felt that the conspiracy to kill Gandhiji was due to Hindu anger against him on account of this advice of his to pay a huge sum of money to the Pakistan Government when it was organising and carrying out a wicked military campaign against us. Our folly in

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helping the enemy with fifty crore rupees at that juncture was thought to be inexcusable and the small militant anti-Gandhi Maharashtrian group felt this as a climax of Gandhiji's disservice to the nation and decided to put an end to this foolish saint whom the nation could not otherwise get rid of. So great was his influence and so foolishly did the people venerate and obey him that these conspirators thought, according to the Sardar, that there was no way out other than assassination.

"We shall honour the commitment and pay what we promised to pay, but not now!" pleaded the Sardar. This was of no avail with Gandhiji. "We have promised to give it *now* and we must give it *now*," said Gandhiji.

What Sardar felt may be right or not; the assassination may be due to the payment of fifty crores, or it may not be that, but the result of a more ancient grudge. But the point is that Gandhiji held the view that national interests in the long run required that we should keep our word once it was solemnly given. We got independence on the basis of the partition and one of the essential terms of the agreement was that we should start Pakistan with an opening cash balance of fifty crores. We should therefore carry out the agreement, insisted Gandhiji, and not start our career of independence with a breach of promise. National interests are not founded on money and material considerations only. The long-

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term interests of a nation are bound up with morals. If the fifty crores had been denied, India would have lost moral power even in 1947 and Gandhiji would have died of a broken heart instead of by a Hindu's revolver. The fifty crores given away saved India's moral status and added to it.

The controversy which was raised over this opening balance for Pakistan recalls to mind the classic discussion over Rama's banishment. Lakshmana used every possible argument against surrendering to the decree but Rama refused to entertain such notions and stood firm that, whatever be the merits of the case, Dasaratha's honour must prevail and his promise must be honoured. In spite of all the vicissitudes of our fortunes, Hindu ideology remains today what it was when Valmiki sang. This episode of Rama's willing departure from Ayodhya was to Gandhiji not only a relevant but essential lesson in political philosophy. Gandhiji firmly stood against the doctrine of pigeon-holing religion and politics separately. His doctrine was the fundamental unity of life. "My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion. I go further and say that every activity of a man of religion must be derived from his religion. If I am to take part in politics, it is only because politics today encircles us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with that snake. I am trying to in-

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troduce religion into politics." This was, Gandhiji's position. By religion he did not mean formal religion or custom treated as religion. He meant the religion that underlies all religions "which bring us," as he put it, "face to face with our Maker."

"I could not live for a single second without religion," said Gandhiji. "Many of my political friends despair of me because they say that even my politics are derived from religion. And they are right. My politics and all other activities of mine *are* derived from my religion": this is what he unambiguously told political friends who objected to his bringing religion into politics. "I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of society and this I could not do unless I took part in politics": this is what he told the Government who objected to his politics and asked him to confine himself to religion. "Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life," he claimed. "If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later." He insisted that the means should be consistent with religion. "Take care of the means, see that the means are pure, free from violence. 'Rama' means strength, moral strength which compels recognition by the opponent. Take care of the means, acquire moral power and the end will take care of itself." This was his teaching.

Every one knows that Gandhiji was a de-

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vout but rational Hindu, that he believed that all religions were true, each one being true for its adherent, that in his philosophy truth and non-violence occupied the highest position and that he placed the greatest emphasis on detachment as taught in the Gita. All this is well-known. What however calls for special attention is Gandhiji's philosophy of persuasion. He spent all his life in bringing other people round to his view, be it the Government of South Africa, the planters of Bihar, the mill-owners of Ahmedabad or the Government of Great Britain operating in India. He believed that the most effective way was non-violence, a name he gave to the method of persuasion through self-suffering. He believed that this should completely replace the method of getting things reformed through force such as armed revolution, terrorism and the like. He believed his method was not only an adequate substitute but superior.

There are two philosophies of life obstinately held, sometimes even by the same individual as by different strong-willed persons. One is what is expressed in the saying that the leopard cannot change its spots. The other is that every human being is basically good and reasonable, and if the approach is properly made, with disinterested love and self-sacrifice, he will be converted from evil and unreason to good and right conduct. Gandhiji swore by the latter philosophy. It is the core of all that he taught by precept and example.

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He never taught anything which he first did not live in his own life.

Gandhi was fully aware that while Satyagraha for specific grievances was simple, Satyagraha for Swaraj was more complicated. It meant the building up of strength for self-government in the process of Satyagraha. He knew we were not ready for self-government. But he believed that the difficult process of organizing non-violent operations with success, which was involved in mass-Satyagraha, was a constructive school for self-government so that if we succeeded we automatically became fit for it.

Gandhiji always paid more importance to reality than to the external form, to the power of the people to wrest freedom than to the actual fact of separation from Britain or the formal Constitution. This attitude of his has been misunderstood or ignored by many critics and scholars who have written about Gandhiji and his activities in the Indian campaign. Swaraj to Gandhiji meant the strength to defy and wrest compliance from the British Government in any matter which it deemed important. "If I can force a giant to do exactly what I want, it means emancipation although we may not have yet parted." This was why he did not include Swaraj in the original resolution of the Congress about Khilafat and Punjab, although when asked to include Swaraj along with the Khilafat demand, he at

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once agreed, because it was already there by implication according to his philosophy.

There is a good deal of conjecture about why Gandhiji did not wish to participate in and deprecated a conference in 1921 winter. Spratt attributes it to Gandhiji's indifference about the political demand. I myself wrote from prison to Gandhiji at the time, and he concurred, that a premature settlement would end in very unsatisfactory terms, because we had not shown enough strength. A settlement then would prevent any fresh consolidated attack for Swaraj, as after a settlement of that kind we could not reasonably reopen it. This and not indifference to Swaraj was the reason.

He gave the weapon of Satyagraha to us, a weapon of self-education as well as an instrument against the oppressor. It emancipates men from subjective weakness. It provides a moral equivalent for revolution. This weapon was put in experiment—if we may use this word now after half a century and after so many changes in the world; it was put in experiment in South Africa in a model manner. It was conducted against very heavy odds by a poor and ignorant people. There was hardly an instance of breach of the principles. It dragged on in all for eight years. At one time Gandhiji could count upon only sixteen followers. But in the end almost the whole community entered the fight and satisfactory terms were obtained from the Government.

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As Mr. Spratt has said summarising this great experiment, Gandhi was left with an immovable faith in the capacity of ordinary poor people to undergo the trials of his method and to observe the principles; and he also acquired an unalterable faith in the efficacy of the method.

When a country is invaded by an enemy armed force, is there any room for the method of Satyagraha or any form of Gandhian resistance?

Gandhiji thought there was.

He believed firmly that if a people refused to be governed by any invading usurper and his army and the refusal was accompanied by complete non-cooperation and was carried by the people to the point of even suffering unto death, no conqueror and no invading army could carry on. From time immemorial, however, nations have thought this to be a difficult if not impossible task and so they organized armed resistance—force against force. This the nations of the world have thought to be easier and simpler than the total passive disobedience unto death involved in the Gandhian method. Gandhi thought that there were no limits to the efficacy or potentiality of his non-violent resistance. If everyone refused to obey, to work for and maintain a conquering army and its leaders, that army and that leader must fail and give up the attempt. This was Gandhiji's conviction. If

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however a people do not have the spirit and determination to offer such total non-violent resistance, it means that they do not dislike the conqueror's rule so greatly, that they are not so fond of self-rule or what passes for it. If they did, they would prefer to die and the resistance, if offered by the people as a whole, must be successful. He would certainly allow armed resistance if the people were incapable of offering such a degree of non-violent resistance through self-suffering. He would however point out that success through violent resistance would depend not on who was right, but on who had greater physical might. In the case of non-violent resistance on the other hand Gandhiji would claim that if a whole people offered it unto death, success was certain and would follow Right and not physical Might.

This was Gandhiji's philosophy. He admitted no limits whatsoever in respect of the potentiality of Satyagraha.

According to Gandhiji, resistance to evil was a duty. Non-resistance was the teaching of Tolstoy and was the way that Jesus taught. But Gandhiji's teaching was not non-resistance but resistance by non-co-operation and, if that was not enough, to stem the evil by non-violent resistance. The evil is not to be left unresisted but should be resisted non-violently, by undertaking upon oneself all the suffering consequent on refusing to surrender to the evil. The teaching of Jesus followed by Tol-

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stoy was that evil was not to be resisted by evil; evil was to be answered by the opposite of it, viz., goodness. The non-violent resistance taught by Gandhiji laid stress on self-suffering consequent on the refusal to surrender to evil. This was what Thoreau of America laid down as the duty of a citizen when faced with what he did not approve. Gandhiji closely followed Thoreau.

This difference between Christian non-resistance and the Gandhian way of Satyagraha should be kept in mind although both the teachings are closely allied in spirit to each other and may even be taken as one and the same.

SYNTHESIS

Gandhiji was not a religious non-conformist. But his unconvinced conformism was limited strictly to matters of lesser importance. He would reject, he said, the authority of the oldest Shastras if they could not convince his reason. But this utter independence, as he called it, he would limit to matters of first-rate importance. In all others which do not involve a departure from one's personal convictions or moral code, he held that one should yield to society.

Gandhiji's philosophy was like a three-legged race in school sports. His thoughts marched slowly, because they always went tied to corresponding action in his own life. He

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never preached what he did not practice before preaching to others. Others marched with the speed of thought, not impeded by action on their own part. He was impeded by the self-imposed necessity to adopt in his own life all that he thought he should preach. Chandra Shankar Shukla has chosen a very apt and illuminating quotation from Epictetus as the motto for his book on Gandhi published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. "You must know that it is no easy thing for a principle to become a man's own, unless each day he maintains it and works it out in life." This is what Gandhiji did with his philosophy. It was the distinguishing feature of his philosophy as well as the distinguishing feature of his life.

Gandhiji believed and preached that all religions are God-given and they were true and necessary for the people to whom those religions were revealed. If we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoints of the followers of those faiths, we should find that they were at bottom all one and all true. Gandhiji wrote to a Jewish lady in March 1914: "You don't need to be a Hindu. Be a true Jewess. If Judaism does not satisfy you, no other faith will give you satisfaction for any length of time. I would advise you to remain a Jewess and appropriate the good in other faiths."

Gandhi wanted every Christian, every Jew, every Mussulman, every Buddhist, every

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Zoroastrian, every Hindu, to be a better and fuller Christian, Jew, Mussulman, Buddhist, Zoroastrian and Hindu, than he had so far been and not to seek truth elsewhere or to disturb one another's faith by efforts to proselytize. According to him the truth was fully contained in the religion each was born to. Some people have argued with me when I put this aspect of Gandhiji's teaching to them: "But, Sir, Christ asked us to carry the truth to all the peoples of the world and not selfishly hold it for ourselves. How can we forget or give up this duty to which we are pledged and which is an integral part of Christianity?" So also the followers of the Prophet of Islam feel and argue. "It is all very well for you, Hindus," they say, "whose scripture accepts the truth of all religions; you may well avoid proselytism. But our Prophet has laid on us a duty to carry the truth to all the nations of the earth and we cannot be indifferent as you may be." This is a sound argument as far as it goes and a plausible refutation of the Gandhian teaching against disturbing the faith of other people either by argumentation or other means. But if the pious Christian and the pious Muslim and the others read more deeply their scriptural authority, read it with understanding as well as reverence, they will find what the command to go out and preach was related to. It is the truth that is universal and not the forms or the unessentials which have grown around the truth to protect it in the particular surroundings in each case. An open-

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minded and deep study of the teachings of Christ or Mohammed would show what exactly was asked to be propagated and to whom. The truth which the prophets commanded their disciples to carry to those who did not know it was that spirit is more precious than material possessions; that God rules the world and that a negation of His rule leads to destruction. The command was to carry faith to the unbelievers, not the disturbance of the faith of believers. Those who denied God were to be brought round. Gandhiji's opposition to proselytising is quite in order and valid even for those who totally and whole-heartedly accept the word of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels or the words of the Prophet of Arabia as recorded in the Koran. The command was to carry the message that they heard, not to seek to enlarge the organization that was built around the message.

"I have reverence for the prophets and saints of all religions," Gandhiji would often say. "I shall pray to God to give me the strength to refrain from being angry with those who revile me for this."

Gandhiji's religion was a rational and ethical one as Dr. Radhakrishnan has observed. He would not accept any belief which did not appeal to his reason or any injunction which did not command itself to his conscience. But Gandhiji has often warned self-willed people not to mistake every impulse for conscience.

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Indeed he has in the clearest terms laid down that it is only the well-disciplined man who leads a pure life that can claim the privilege of acting according to his conscience.

This rational approach towards religion did not prevent Gandhi from paying utmost reverence to the scriptures of Hinduism. But he tended to explain and interpret every text to suit his rationality. He looked upon the Ramayana and the Mahabharata as mere allegories and Rama was just a name for God with him.

Gandhi preached and practised, what are called by the Communists "bourgeois virtues". His preaching was done through the most effective medium, viz., by his own practising the things he preached. He tried to combine Western and Indian cultures, taking up those elements which best exhibited and conformed to these virtues. He attempted, without knowing it, a religious synthesis between Christianity and Hinduism and later found all the elements he took up from the former in the latter itself and interpreted them as such.

Perhaps Gandhiji was influenced in a subtle way by Tilak to stick to Hinduism in a fairly aggressive way. He could be called a Christianised Hindu. Swami Vivekananda once said when talking to us in 1897 in Madras, "Oh the Brahmos! they are undeclared members of the Christian Unitarian Church."

Gandhi had no mystic experience and never claimed any such experience. Some people

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believe, particularly in the West, that Gandhi practised Yoga. He practised it in the highest sense, viz., self-restraint in all activities, not in the technical sense usually attached to 'Yoga'.

All Gandhiji's passions were converted by self-discipline into one passion, to serve the poor. He accepted Truth as the only law that governed him. His strength came from his absolute faith in God and surrender to Him whenever he was in difficulty or landed in despair.

The formula of Ahimsa should not mislead us to dogmatism and formalism. Gandhiji was not an unpractical man. He said: "Man cannot for a moment live without consciously or unconsciously committing outward *himsa*. A votary of *ahimsa* therefore remains true to his faith if the spring of all his actions is compassion." The seat of *ahimsa* is in the mind. As Spratt has boldly and rightly put it, *ahimsa* is compatible sometimes with killing, never with hating. Compassion is a more understandable formula than *ahimsa* and it is love and compassion that Gandhiji wanted us to adopt as the rule of life. Non-violence was preached and practised by Gandhi as a weapon of conflict with the British. But that is not its whole connotation. It is not only a way of battle. It is also a way of life and peace. The words love and compassion are therefore more expressive than the negative words *ahimsa* or non-violence used by him.

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Gandhiji was a completely orthodox Hindu in his attitude towards civilization. He held that civilization consists not in multiplication of wants but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and increases the capacity for service. After independence, this teaching has naturally lapsed into comparative oblivion in spite of efforts on the part of a few devout no-changers. The movement for industrial progress sponsored very vigorously and noisily by Sri Nehru has obliterated the teaching of Gandhi during the freedom struggle, as was anticipated by Spratt.

Gandhiji's utterances written and spoken are a pragmatic synthesis of the culture and religion of the masses of India with modern ideas imbibed by him along with other intellectuals of India from the West. They are rather utilitarian than dogmatic.

Gandhi was religious, but not much interested in theology or metaphysics. He stressed ethical considerations above all and these are just such as were understood by ordinary people. He was in his actual work, as a politician or a reformer, practical, shrewd and thorough.

The duty of active benevolence, of service to all that need it, the importance attached to conscience as opposed to tradition, the higher place given to morality, faith and works than to knowledge, the emphasis on asceticism and

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celibacy, these and other elements, common to Christianity and most other religions including Hinduism, are generally believed by the Christians to be exclusively Christian. When these common principles are found emphasised by Tiruvalluvar, some eminent British Missionary scholars have stated it may be due to Christian influence on the Tamil Saint who belonged to the first century A.D. as some place him. This may be absurd. But when Mr. Spratt says that Gandhiji's insistence on these virtues is due to the influence of Christianity and the recorded history of the fathers of Christianity, we cannot reject the claim: because Gandhi was definitely under the influence of Christianity and Western literature including Tolstoy and could not escape such strong influence. On the other hand he was never very much of a scholar of Hindu scripture or a traditionalist. Gandhi drew his ideas freely from the best in Christianity and Christian fathers. But seeing how well they coincided with the best in Hinduism, he preferred to make them distinctly Hindu and spread them as such among the people—with success perhaps not so much in reforming them, as in becoming their beau-ideal and Mahatma.

If we draw inferences from Gandhiji's statements as distinguished from conclusions drawn from his activities, we may not altogether be on good ground. For Gandhiji definitely preferred to be dependent on Hindu-

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ism rather than any modern or external influences, whatever the actuality may be. Again his established greatness leads people to be biassed in their judgments. The Christians would prefer to trace his great qualities to the influence of Christianity. The rationalists and moderns would prefer to attribute his thoughts and decisions to the influence of their own creeds, religious and ethical. One practical test would be to see how orthodox Hindus react to Gandhiji's doctrines of life. They reacted on the whole adversely until they were overwhelmed by his political success and popularity. On the whole my view is that modern influence made the man, although certain basic elements were a permanent acquisition from early life, which was of course the conformist Hinduism of his caste. But as his work was among the masses and no reform work is possible unless you belong to them, he found valuable confirmation for all his tenets of thoughts and conduct in Hinduism and he had no difficulty in convincing himself and the masses that he was a Hindu cent-per-cent. His anchor was in God and His Grace, which is enough to make any one a conformist Hindu despite any heterodoxy. It is difficult to refute the claim made by many that on the whole Gandhiji's moral doctrines were derived from Christianity and the ethics of the modern West and that he found confirmation, not source, in his Hinduism. But it is equally difficult to refute the thesis that as he was brought up as a Hindu in his earliest

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years, the influence of Hinduism must be deemed predominant. His expressed great attachment to the Gita is also something that cannot be discarded. He learned to make all mythology allegorical. All the same he believed in a personal God, especially when he faced some crisis. Gandhi was by no means a fundamentalist Hindu. He was rather modernist than orthodox although he would like to clothe his modernism in orthodox clothes and raise smoke-screen of ancientness about it.

Gandhiji's 'Truth' which confuses many people and appears wandering far out of its bounds is the inter-relation of all experience to principles. Truth was to him something that includes all moral principles. So Gandhi said: "Truth is God."

Gandhi was a Tolstoyan but not an impossibilist. He was more tolerant of inequalities than Tolstoy.

Gandhiji was not a believer in the cheap theory that man's actions depend only on environment. He was not a determinist. He believed in divine intervention as well as in free will. He always said that God's will was law though not understood by us. His oft-repeated statements that Truth is God, and that God is Law are all brief expressions of a complicate doctrine which perhaps was modified now and then as he grew up to ripe old age. He strongly believed in self-control and self-culture which would enable one to overcome all environment.

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Love is the means to persuasion and conquest, not hate. Ends grow out of means as trees grow out of seed. Men are essentially good. History is not all economic conflict as the Communists make out. The following resolution was passed by the Congress Working Committee at Bombay on 18-6-1934 at Gandhiji's instance: "It is necessary in view of loose talk about confiscation of private property and class war, to remind Congressmen that the Karachi resolution, which lays down certain principles, neither contemplates confiscation of private property without just cause or compensation, nor advocacy of class war. The Working Committee is of opinion that confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence."

Gandhiji did not believe that equal distribution of wealth could ever be realised. He therefore aimed at equitable distribution. He did not believe that the wealthy should be dispossessed of their possession. This violent action, he said, cannot benefit society. Society will be the poorer, for it will lose the gifts of men who know how to make wealth. The non-violent way is evidently superior. Gandhiji invited the capitalist to regard himself as a trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital.

Even in a most perfect world, Gandhiji said, we shall fail to avoid inequalities. The idea of class war did not appeal to him at all. All that

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can legitimately be expected of the wealthy class is that they should hold their riches and talents in trust and use them for the service of society. To insist on more would be to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

"I believe," he said, "that independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life, by developing her thousands of cottages, and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with a complicated material life, based on high speed imposed on us by mammon worship. My fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled some nations to exploit others. Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. To-day machinery helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it is not the philanthropic desire to save labour for the worker, but greed.

"I look upon an increase of the power of the State with the greatest fear because, while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which is at the root of all progress.

"Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control

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whether it is a foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj Government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life."

These are Gandhiji's words on the all-important subject of what shall belong to the State and what to the individual. Further elaboration may convert this lecture into current politics, which I wish to avoid.

What Gandhiji understood by democracy can be seen from the words I have quoted as well as in the following:

"I hope to demonstrate that real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority." Swaraj of Gandhiji's conception was not merely a people's freedom from foreign rule, but a condition wherein every individual enjoyed maximum freedom from external control, *swatantra* as distinguished from *paratantra*.

Gandhiji had views on every topic that was taken to him. People of all sorts took his time over what interested them and asked what he thought about them and he did not spare himself and never took time to answer. He gave weighty answers but we should not attach too much importance to everything he said in this way. Nor is it prudent in a discourse such as

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I am involved in, to cover all the matters on which he expressed some opinion or other. I have therefore omitted a great deal and confined myself to what was the main substance of his life-work. "He tried to proclaim the verities of religion by living them—not by precept but by practice: such ancient but vital verities as truthfulness, compassion, social justice, tolerance and, above all, love." These are Sri Gagan Vihari Mehta's words which well summarise Gandhiji's life as well as philosophy. To this must be added "courage and the will to resist evil in the only manner in which it can be effectively resisted." He taught this effective and religious way of resisting evil through percept but much more by practising it and making others practise it. He belongs to the class to which Buddha, Socrates and Jesus belong. We have heard and read about these souls. But we have seen Gandhi with our own eyes doing what he did for us, and may our lives bear some testimony to our having enjoyed this great good fortune.

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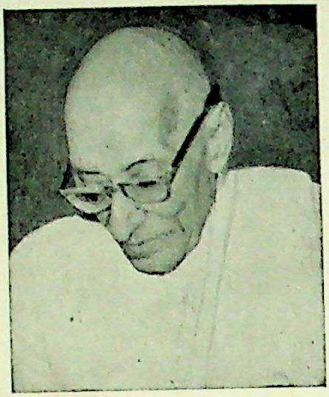

THE AUTHOR

CHAKRAVARTI RAJAGOPALACHARI, popularly known as "Rajaji" or "C. R.", is a great patriot, astute politician, incisive thinker, and one of the greatest of living Indians. As a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, as an ardent freedom-fighter, as Chief Minister of Madras, as Governor of West Bengal, as Home Minister of India and as the first Indian Governor-General of India he has rendered yeoman service to India and left an indelible impress on our comtemporary life.

Rajaji's books on Marcus Aurelius, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads* are popular. In *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* he displays his inimitable flair for story-telling and applying the moral of stories to the needs of modern times.

This book is an addition to the vast literature on Gandhian thought and philosophy and would be widely welcomed and appreciated as a significant and distinctive contribution.

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